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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S POLICY ON IRAQ

REF: STATE 003592

On January 11, Charge presented Spanish text of Iraq policy elements to Acting Foreign Minister Enrique Reina and requested a pull-aside meeting with Foreign Minister Milton Jimenez later that evening following his return from the presidential inauguration in Nicaragua. In meeting with FM Jimenez, Charge delivered a Spanish text copy of President Bush's speech. Jimenez appreciated receiving the speech and said that he would read it and offer any comments the following day. Charge outlined the elements of the new strategy, highlighting Iraqi leadership in security, economic, and political areas. Jimenez acknowledged his understanding of the new approach, but did not offer substantive comment. Also, on the evening of January 11, Charge discussed the new policy with Defense Minister Aristides Mejia, who asked about specific security arrangements under the plan. Mejia found the policy to be "interesting," but stated his skepticism that the Iraqi's factions were ready or willing to cooperate with each other. We will report any further comments we receive on the policy.
WILLIARD